

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont**

TEAM: Independent & Federal Programs

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education grant initial general and special education independent school approval, to serve a maximum of 24 students in grades 5-12, within the disability categories of Learning Impairment, Specific Learning Disabilities, Emotional Disabilities, and Other Health Impairment, to Royal-Windsor Academy, Bethel, VT?

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education grant initial general and special education independent school approval, to serve a maximum of 24 students in grades 5-12, within the disability categories of Learning Impairment, Specific Learning Disabilities, Emotional Disabilities, and Other Health Impairment, to Royal-Windsor Academy, Bethel, VT. This approval is for two years, through June 30, 2011.

Approval is subject to the condition that the school immediately report to the Department of Education whenever changes occur in enrollment, programs, policies, facilities, financial capacity, staffing, or administration, during the approval period.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Title 16 V.S.A. §166(b)
State Board Rule: 2228 et.seq.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. Royal-Windsor Academy is operated by the Northeastern Family Institute, Vermont, Inc. in conjunction with the Clara Martin Center. The school offers an academic program that is socially and emotionally supportive for a maximum of 24 students in grades 5-12. Royal-Windsor Academy will serve students within the disability categories of Learning Impairment, Specific Learning Disabilities, Emotional Disabilities, and/or Other Health Impairment. All students will be on an IEP, and receive case management and specific accommodations. The school's positive learning environment encourages the students to identify individual strengths and goals; and the students are empowered to manage their academic success through goal setting. Students are encouraged to take risks, rise to challenges, fulfill expectations, and support each other as well as the program mission. Students and teachers work together to identify individual learning styles and then work towards developing specific strategies designed to utilize strengths to assist in the learning process.
2. Royal-Windsor Academy was visited on behalf of the Commissioner by Laura Glass, Pat Pallas Gray, and Troy McAllister, on October 28, 2008.

3. Royal-Windsor Academy is housed in an extremely large building which has multiple tenants. The school is located on the first floor of the building and includes four classrooms, a large community room, a kitchenette, a reception area, and office spaces. There are some green spaces on the north and west sides of the property that can be utilized. The facilities are adequate to meet the needs of the students and meet state and federal health and safety regulations. The facility is handicapped accessible.
4. The minimum course of study, as prescribed in 16 V.S.A. §906, is provided and adapted to the age and abilities of the students. The curriculum is process-oriented and intended to meet individual, developmental, and emotional needs. Academic instruction takes place in a small group setting and offers creative, student-centered approaches to meeting curriculum standards. Teachers construct academic experiences to meet both educational and behavioral goals and objectives defined in the student's IEPs. Support services include a small, onsite library and computers for student use. Other services are coordinated and provided by Clara Martin, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Developmental Disabilities. There were six students attending on the day of the visit.
5. The staff includes a director, who is licensed in special education, an English teacher, a science/social studies teacher, and a math teacher. Spanish, woodworking, and physical education instruction is also provided by the staff. Consultants are utilized to provide art instruction. The staff is supported by a classroom counselor, a clinician, and the Regional Director at the Northeastern Family Institute (NFI). Staff members are qualified by degree, training, and/or experience for their positions.
6. The student health, attendance, and assessment records were reviewed and found to be in good order. Fire drills are held on a regular basis.
7. The school maintains an operating schedule that includes a total number of instructional hours each year which is not less than that required of a public school serving the same grades.
8. The school submitted financial information to verify it has the capacity to operate during the period of approval.
9. Royal-Windsor Academy has a policy on prevention of harassment of students that is as stringent as the Department's model policy.
10. Royal-Windsor Academy has developed policies for admissions, discipline, and significant change in placement. These were reviewed and found to be appropriate.
11. The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is part of the school's philosophy and each student's placement is based on individual needs for a LRE.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: None

STAFF AVAILABLE:

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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont**

- TEAM:** Independent & Federal Programs
- ITEM:** Will the State Board of Education grant renewal of general and special education independent school approval, to serve a maximum of 10 male residential students and 14 male day students, ages 6-14 in grades K-8, within the disability categories of Specific Learning Disabilities, Emotional Disturbance, Speech or Language Impairment, Learning Impairment and/or Other Health Impairment to Brookhaven Learning Center, Chelsea, VT?

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education grants renewal of general and special education independent school approval, to serve a maximum of 10 male residential students and 14 male day students, ages 6-14 in grades K-8, within the disability categories of Specific Learning Disabilities, Emotional Disturbance, Speech or Language Impairment, Learning Impairment, and/or Other Health Impairment, to Brookhaven Learning Center, Chelsea, VT. This approval is for 5 years, through June 30, 2014.

Approval is subject to the condition that the school immediately report to the Department of Education whenever any changes occur in enrollment, programs, policies, facilities, financial capacity, staffing, or administration during the approval period.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Title 16 V.S.A. §166(b)
State Board Rule: 2228 et. seq.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. Brookhaven Learning Center is an independent residential and day school providing education to male students, ages 6-14 in grades K-8, within the disability categories of Specific Learning Disabilities, Emotional Disturbance, Speech or Language Impairment, Learning Impairment, and/or Other Health Impairment. Established in 1952 and incorporated as Brookhaven Home for Boys, Inc., Brookhaven Learning Center provides educational services within a therapeutic milieu environment that includes individual and group therapy, family therapy, activities to build and develop self-confidence and self-esteem, assertiveness and relaxation techniques. The school's goal is to facilitate each child's growth and development while providing an environment that allows the children to experience success in positive interactions with peers and adults.
2. Brookhaven Learning Center was last granted approval by the State Board of Education on October 18, 2005 through June 30, 2007.
3. On behalf of the Commissioner, Laura Glass, Pat Pallas Gray, Joan Larsen, and Ernest Wheeler visited Brookhaven on April 1, 2009.

4. Brookhaven Learning Center is located on 180 acres in the small rural community of Chelsea, VT. The property includes a learning center, which opened its doors in the fall of 2000, a large playing field, swimming brook, hiking trails, a garden and other recreational fields as well as the pavilion over the basketball court. The dining and residential facilities are in the main building. Within the learning center there are three main classrooms, a computer lab, a resource room used by the Special Education Coordinator, two study rooms, and three “quiet rooms”. The latter are used for students who need seclusion for their own safety or the safety of others. The second floor provides office space. The first floor of the learning center is handicapped accessible. The facilities are adequate to meet the needs of the students, and meets state and federal health and safety regulations.
5. The minimum course of study, as prescribed in 16 V.S.A. §906, is provided and adapted to meet the age and abilities of the students. Teachers utilize diverse teaching methods to present the curriculum and meet the goals of each child’s Individual Education Plan (IEP). Teachers are trained to consider the emotional state of each student and to tailor educational expectations and teaching strategies to each child’s level of functioning. There were 14 students enrolled on the day of the visit.
6. Brookhaven Learning Center is staffed by a lead teacher, a full-time licensed special educator, two full-time teachers and a classroom assistant to provide behavior/academic support. Therapeutic support services are provided via a clinical/family therapist, individual clinicians, and group clinicians. The residential program includes a residential coordinator, team leaders, and residential counselors. The staff members are qualified by degree, training, or experience for their positions. The educational, clinical, and residential programs are overseen by Brookhaven’s Executive Director.
7. Brookhaven Learning Center submitted financial information to verify it has the capacity to operate during the period of approval.
8. The school maintains an operating schedule that includes a total number of instructional hours each year which is not less than that required of a public school serving the same grades.
9. Brookhaven Learning Center has a policy on prevention of harassment of students that is as stringent as the Department’s model policy.
10. Brookhaven Learning Center has developed policies for admissions, discipline, and significant change in placement. These were reviewed and found to be appropriate.
11. The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is part of the school’s philosophy and each student’s placement is based on individual needs for a LRE.

COST IMPLICATIONS: None

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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont**

TEAM: Independent & Federal Programs

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education grant renewal of tutorial approval to Mountainside House Tutorial Program, Ludlow & Proctorsville, Vermont, to serve a maximum of 12 male and female students, ages 13-18, in need of crisis stabilization and emergency housing?

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education grants renewal of tutorial approval to Mountainside House Tutorial Program, Ludlow & Proctorsville, Vermont, to serve a maximum of 12 male and female students, ages 13-18, in need of crisis stabilization and emergency housing. This approval is for two years, through June 30, 2011.

Approval is subject to the condition that the tutorial program immediately reports to the Department of Education whenever changes occur in the program's policies, facilities, staffing, and administration, during the period of approval.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Title 16 V.S.A. §828

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. The Mountainside House Tutorial Program is a required part of the residential crisis stabilization and emergency shelter operated by Windsor County Youth Service. The tutorial program operates year-round, providing a minimum of 25 hours per week of age-appropriate instruction, which is coordinated with the participant's responsible school district. Potential residents are required to sign an agreement to take part in both the treatment and the educational components before admission to the program. Treatment is provided for crisis stabilization, through individual, family and group counseling. The average length of stay ranges from 14-60 days. Mountainside House is licensed by the Department for Children and Families (DCF) as a shelter to assist runaways and as a residential child care facility.
2. The Mountainside House Tutorial Program was visited on behalf of the Commissioner by Laura Glass, Ernest Wheeler, and Pat Pallas Gray on March 19, 2009. Mountainside House has been approved by the State Board of Education as a tutorial program since March 20, 2001.
3. The Mountainside House Tutorial Program's classroom, common area, and the educational director's office are located on the second floor of a large, two-story, traditional wood-frame house in the village of Proctorsville. The first floor of this house has resident bedrooms for

the female program participants. This house has a “hard-wired” sprinkler system throughout, which is inspected annually. The building used in Ludlow is a large, three-story, traditional wood-frame house on a dead end street in an older residential neighborhood, which is used to provide residential living space for the male students. Program participants needing a handicapped accessible classroom space will be accommodated at this site. This building also has a “hard-wired” sprinkler system throughout, which is inspected annually. Both facilities meet state and federal health and safety regulations, and are adequate to meet the needs of the tutorial program participants.

4. The Mountainside House Tutorial Program is staffed by an educational coordinator, who is a licensed secondary teacher, and a teacher’s aide. The tutorial staff works in collaboration with the two Program Directors. A consultant, who is a licensed in special education, is available to provide direct service to students identified as in need of these services, as well as to meet with the educational staff about curriculum and accommodation needs. The operations of The Mountainside House Tutorial Program are overseen by an on-site Executive Director.
5. The Mountainside House Tutorial Program submitted information regarding its financial capacity to carry out its educational purposes for the period of approval.
6. The Mountainside House Tutorial Program implements policies and procedures around confidentiality and the maintenance of educational records. The program maintains a register of daily attendance for each student and reports the attendance to the responsible school district. The program has developed policies for admissions, discipline, and significant change in placement. These were reviewed and found to be appropriate.
7. The Mountainside House Tutorial Program coordinates with the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) for initiating referrals when appropriate, planning and participating in IEP meetings, providing information for evaluations, and planning and developing accommodations called for in a student’s IEP.

COST IMPLICATIONS: None

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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont**

TEAM: Independent and Federal Programs

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education acknowledge that an approved independent school operating under the name of Pine Ridge School, Williston, VT, is closing after graduation in June of 2009?

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education acknowledges that an approved independent school operating under the name of Pine Ridge School, Williston, VT, is closing after graduation in June of 2009.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Title 16 V.S.A. §166(b)
State Board Rule: 2228 et. seq.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. Pine Ridge School received approval as a special education independent school from the State Board of Education on January 21, 1986. The school has been continuously approved by the State Board since that date. Pine Ridge School's general education program is accredited by the New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEAS&C), a regional accrediting agency recognized by the Board Education via rule 2275.
2. The Independent School Office was notified in March of 2009 that Pine Ridge School is closing after the school's graduation in June of 2009.

COST IMPLICATIONS: None

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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont**

TEAM: Independent and Federal Programs

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education acknowledge that an approved independent school operating under the name of Wheeler Mountain Academy, Barton, VT, is closing on May 29, 2009?

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education acknowledges that an approved independent school operating under the name of Wheeler Mountain Academy, Barton, VT, is closing on May 29, 2009.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Title 16 V.S.A. §166(b)
State Board Rule: 2228 et. seq.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

3. Wheeler Mountain Academy received initial general and special education independent school approval from the State Board of Education on August 16, 2005. The school's current general and special education independent school approval is through June 30, 2009.
4. The Independent School Office was notified in February of 2009 that Wheeler Mountain Academy's last day of operation will be on May 29, 2009.

COST IMPLICATIONS: None

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